

PROMISCUOUS
ORDINATIONS

Are Destructive to the
HONOUR & SAFETY
OF THE
Church of England :

(If they should be allowed in it.)

Written in a Letter to a Person of Quality.


John Pearson

LONDON.

Printed for James Collins at the Kings-Head in
Westminster-Hall, 1668.

20 x 15 cm
16p

ORDINATIONS

An Ordination to the

MINISTRY OF THE

OF THE

CHURCH OF UNION

THEOLOGICAL

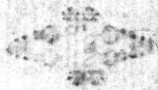
SEMINARY,

NEW YORK.

GIFT FROM

DAVID H. MCALPIN.

Written in a Letter to a Friend of Union



LODGE

Printed for James Collins at the Kings-Head in
Westminster-Hall, 1888.



A Person of Quality,

A Member of the

CHURCH of ENGLAND,

To a Moderate Divine.

SIR,

GIVE me leave to let you understand,
 That I am by a real and unfeigned
 PROFESSION a true Son of the
 Church of ENGLAND, one whom God hath
 blessed with a competent Family, of whose e-
 ternal welfare I am equally solicitous. We
 are seated with many neighbours of the same
 judgment and desire of future happiness in a
 Country

(4)

Countrey Parish with an ORTHODOX and able MINISTER, whose age and infirmity seem to foretell we shall scarce enjoy him another Winter.

Now, Sir, the various Discourses and CONTRIVANCES in this present juncture, together with the known Inclinations of our PATRON, threaten us with a PASTOR as next Incumbent, who is not a Pastor Canonically ordained, but hath received something which he calls Ordination, either after a Classical or Congregational way.

In this case I apply my self to you, who are rendred a MODERATE DIVINE, desirous to know whether your Moderation hath induced you to promote or comply with that which seems to us so great Confusion; and to declare how you can answer it to that Church of which you are also a Member, and what Satisfaction you can give to our Consciences, who are like to be cast into this Condition.

ANSWER.

(63)

A N S W E R.

Sir,

I Cannot take any delight, as to the Differences in matters of Religion, but in the composure of them onely: and if I understand my self, nothing can ever alter that temper, by which I have been so long enclined to a due Enlargement and Indulgence for such as are ready to afford a rational Compliance. But I hope that no such Facility of nature or opinion, shall ever reduce me to that weakness, as to betray the great and everlasting Concerns of the Church, or to give over the indispensable duty of endeavouring that Unity which is necessary to its Conservation.

That the Order of the Ministry is necessary to the Continuation of the Gospel according to the Promises of Christ, as

it

it was to the first Plantation of it according to his Institution, is a Doctrine Indubitable. That this Ministry is derived by a *Succession* and constant propagation, and that the *Unity* and *Peace* of the Church of Christ are to be conserved by a due and legitimate *Ordination*, no man who considereth the Practice of the *Apostles* and *Ecclesiastical History*, can ever doubt. This way of *Ordination* having continued so many ages one and the same, could never be considerably alter'd, without some great *Commutations* and *Dissensions* in the Church, and the manifest breach of *Union* and *Communion* in that body; whomsoever we judg guilty of the breach of that *Union*, which is not necessary now to dispute. And as the first introduction of *different Ordinations* caus'd a standing and settled *Opposition*, precluding all ways of *Reconciliation*: So they cannot be brought into any one Church, but they must

must make such a division and disparity in the *Administrations*, as will amount to no less than a *Schism*.

However in the peculiar and happy condition of our Church, these *promiscuous* Ordinations, if all allowed by it, are most destructive to that which is the Safety and the Honour of it. We have the greatest felicity which could happen to a *Reformation*, as being *regular* and *authoritative*, that we have so taken away the many mistakes and errors which had been introduc'd by a long Ignorance and *U*-surpation, as to retain a perfect *Compliance* with the *Ancient Church* : and therefore we can boldly and truly affirm, we are the same with the *Primitive Christians*, even those of *Rome* : and while we hold and maintain our *Ordinations* legitimate, we speak the same language with the most Glorious *Fathers*, *Martyrs* and *Saints* of those happy and pious times. But if we
once

once admit a *diversity* in our Ordinations, we have lost the honour of *Succession*, we have cast away our weapons of defence, we have betray'd our own cause and laid our selves open to the common Enemy of all *Protestants*, and we shall at last inevitably fall into the *Socinian* doctrine, to deny all necessity or use of any *Mission* or *Ordination*.

Again though our *Discipline* be much weakened, and the good effects thereof obstructed by many *Scruples* and *Oppositions* rais'd against it, yet they can be no just imputation to that wholesom *Institution*, it being sufficiently known from whence those *Obstructions* proceed. But if all *sorts* of *Ordination* be any way established by sufficient *Authority*, if what is so earnestly desired be indulged,

Prop.

p. 82.

That a man once ordained any way be still held and retained for a *Labourer* in the *Harvest*, the most legitimate *Process* in

Ecclesi-

Ecclesiastical affairs will become ineffectual and irrational. Many necessary *Articles* of Enquiry, founded upon the greatest *Justice* and *Authority*, will be put off with such unblameable refusals, and answer'd with so much reason and equity, that *His Majesties Ecclesiastical Laws* can be with no conscience put in *Execution*, when they which are to be prosecuted as delinquents according to Law, must be pronounced the most innocent in the opinion and conscience of the Administrators of the same Law. What an uncomfortable and discouraging *Confusion* is this, whereby *Presentments* shall be made of those persons who are conscientiously conformable to the Doctrine and Orders of the Church, for actions or omissions proceeding solely out of that Conscience and Conformity, and they who *factiously* or *erroneously dissent* from that Doctrine and Order, shall avoid their own and promote

the presentment of others, and in this error or faction shall be protected and encouraged by a superinduced Authority. Thus by *promiscuous Ordinations* the Doctrine of the Church will be render'd indefensible, and the *Discipline* unpracticable. b 157

Although these evil *Consequences* be of great moment in the general, and threaten our *Berbel* with the notion of a *Babel*, yet because most men are more apprehensive of particular mischiefs, and stronger moved with *Personal Inconveniencies*; I shall more earnestly apply my self to that condition which you have represented in reference to your self, your Family and Neighbour of the same persuasion: and even this consideration will be of great latitude and concernment, because it is not confined to you alone, but all of the same judgment will be subject to the same unsettlement, and lie under the same fears and Discouragement. b 158

If a person onely qualified by a *Congregational Mission* should be set over you *authoritatively* as your lawful Pastor, to whose *Ministerial* acts it is expected you should apply your self in all publick matters of Religion: you being of a *constant Persuasion* that the *Validity* of such Acts hath a necessary relation to the *Legitimacy* of *Ministry*, & of as certain an *Opinion* that such a *Mission* cannot amount to a legitimate *Ordination*. I cannot see what comfort you take in any compliance with such *Administrations*.

Nay further, if a person be said to have obtained Orders after the *Presbyterian* way in the late times, when he might have received them from a *Bishop*, & since the happy restoration of publick Order in the Church, when many of his *Brethren* have submitted, still *obstinately* refuses to receive *Ordination* after the *established* way of the Church of England: in this case, if you

doubt whether his *Ordination* be *valid*, or conclude it *null*. I confess I know no *argument* to convince you, or to encline you to another *Persuasion*.

But then I cannot but lament your *unquiet* and *sad Condition*, accidentally cast upon you, for reasons which I take no delight to consider: and through the short expression in your Letter, I can easily perceive what Thoughts and Apprehensions may press and discourage you.

For as you render your self a *Son* of our Church, I conceive you are one who values the *Liturgy*, thinking it your duty to give God that Service, and taking much comfort in the *ancient & regular Devotion* expressed in those Publick Prayers; which being a *nixt Office*, and having been so ever since the Apostolical times, wherein the *Priest*, or *Presbyter*, and the People *jointly & interchangeably* concur, and the *Rubrick* directing what words belong to

the *Priest*, and can properly in the sense intended (sometimes at least) be used by no other; I confess you cannot but abate of the *devotion* and comfort of your *Prayers*, when you think the *person* appointed to read them is no *Priest* or *Presbyter*.

As for the *Administration* of the *Sacrament* of *Baptism*, you cannot regularly but desire to have your *Children* baptized and received into the *Congregation* of *Christ's Church* in that solemn manner, and by such a *person* as is appointed by the same Church to receive them; and though in case of *Necessity* this Office may be dispensed with in baptizing for the *benefit* of the *Infant*, yet it will be very hard to create any other *Necessity* than what arises on the *Infants* part, or to make use of that irregularity when there is no *Necessity*, which is onely indulged to *Necessity*.

But as to the other *Sacrament*, the *Supper of the Lord*, your case is far worse. For to

that you are often invited, may obliged to receive it *thrice a year*, and I doubt not but earnestly desire *frequently* to participate of the body and blood of your SAVIOUR. Whereas if you be resolved that your Pastor established is not a *Priest* or *Presbyter*, and consequently hath no power to consecrate the *Elements*, or render them *Sacramental*; I cannot see how you can follow him to the *Holy Table*, or with what *Comfort* or *Conscience* you can bring your Family, or concur with your Neighbours, to receive the *Elements* from his Hands. And yet abstaining from the *Sacrament*, you are thereby deprived of the *Spiritual* strength and comfort which you desire and have cause to expect; and are moreover *betrayed* to the *Censures* of the Church, in compliance to whose Doctrine you are rendered disobedient to her *Commands*.

Lastly,

Lastly, the unfeigned exercise of *Religion* is undoubtedly, as never more Necessary, so never so Comfortable as upon the Bed of our *Sickness*, especially upon the approach of *Death*: wherefore the *Church* hath taken great care that the *Minister* shall attend, and how he shall behave himself in the *Visitation of the sick*, for their comfort and advantage. This *Comfort* I confesse must be taken from you, who are of that persuasion concerning your *Pastor*, for if upon the apprehension of your later end, you feel your *Conscience* troubled, and being observant of the method prescribed, desire to make a special *Confession*, and receive the benefit of *Absolution*; to which end the *Priest* is ordered to use these words, *By the authority of Christ committed to me I absolve thee of all thy sins*: you will never acquiesce in the *Absolution*, where you acknowledge no *Commission*, nor can you expect any *Efficacy* which dependeth upon the *Authority*.

These

These and the like I look upon not as formal Objections, or civills, but as real and severe complaints rais'd upon Sobber and Religious grounds, matter for *Christian Zeal*, rather than *Moderation*. And therefore I cannot persuade my self that any person endued with any *Kindness* or *Care* of the Religion sented in this Nation, can ever *contrive* or *assent* unto so great a discouragement to the conscientious Professors of it, and confusion in the *management* and *administration* of our Church.

F I N I S.

